

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 020918Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1761

INFO USLO PEKING

S E C R E T HONG KONG 8754

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH

SUBJ: CONGEN POLITICAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK

1. WE BELIEVE THAT MOST DEPARTMENTAL READERS OF THIS POST'S PRODUCT WOULD SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN BOTH VOLUMINOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE IN OUR COVERAGE IN COOPERATION WITH USLO OF THE CURRENT MOVEMENT IN THE PRC. AT THE SAME TIME, MOST WOULD ALSO AGREE WITH US IN HONG KONG THAT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PROVIDE MORE THAN TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AS TO THE MOVEMENT'S DIRECTION AND PROBABLE EFFECTS. PRIMARILY, THIS IS DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY COMPLEXITY OF THE MOVEMENT ITSELF, BUT WE FEEL THAT BY CONCENTRATING OUR REPORTIN A LITTLE MORE WE COULD MAKE OUR CONTRIBUTIONS MORE USEFUL TO WASHINGTON POLICY-MARKERS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AS FALL APPROACHS, BRINGING WITH IT RENEWED ATTENTION TO US/PRC RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SECRETARY'S POSSIBLE TRIP TO CHINA.

2. WE HAVE JUST SENT TO A WIDER CIRCLE OF ADDRESSEES AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RISING CONCERN IN CHIA OVER DECLINING INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND THENEW SITUATION THIS CREATES FOR THE INTERNAL POLITICAL MOVEMENT. OUR SUBSEQUENT REPORTING WILL ATTEMPT TO BRING INTO CLEARER OUTLINE THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN WHAT THE CHINESE ARE TOLD TO EXPECT FROM THE MOVEMENT AS A MANIFESTATION OF MAOIST POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS AS THE MOVEMENT PROCEEDS. BY FOCUSING ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTENTIONS AND REALITIES WE HOPE TO

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WORK MORE SYSTEMATICALLY.

3. ON ASPECT OF THE CURRENT PRC SITUATION TO WHICH WE WILL GIVE SOMEWHAT LESS ATTENTION THAT HERETOFORE IS CHOU EN-LAI. FREQUENT RECURRENT PRESS SPECULATION RE CHOU'S HEALTH, E.G., IS HE HOSPITALIZED, NOT HOSPITALIZED, IS HE WORKING, NOT WORKING, ETC., POINTS UP HOW MUCH TIME COULD BE SPENT ON THIS FASCINATING SUBJECT. THE PREMIER HAS BEEN SO MUCH A KEY FIXTURE IN BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASPECTS THROUGHOUT CHINESE COMMUNIST HISTORY THAT SUCH MEDIA INTEREST AND SPECULATION IS NATURAL BUT THERE IS A REAL RISK HERE FOR USG CHINA WATCHERS TO GET SIDETRACKED.

4. OBVIOUSLY WE WON'T IGNORE CHOU, BUT WE BELIEVE OUR EFFORTS SHOULD NOW BE DIRECTED AT ANALYSING THE SCENE AS IT WOULD BE WITHOUT HIM IN THE SAME CENTRAL POSITION OF INFLUENCE HE HAS OCCUPIED UNTIL VERY RECENTLY AND THAT WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE NEW PERSONALITIES WHOM THE REGIME WILL LIKELY PUT FORWARD TO DEAL WITH THE US/PRC RELATIONSHIP IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT PRESENTLY ANTICIPATE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE AFFECTING PRC POLICY TOWARDS THE US, THE CONDITION OF THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP AS IT SHAPES UP THIS FALL WILL DETERMINE WHETHER ANY USEFUL ADVANCES IN NORMALIZING OUR RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE MADE DURING THIS PERIOD.  
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